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Emil G. Hirsch.

My Religion and the War (1918)

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and

The War

A DISCOURSE

By

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Gift of
Elaine and Allen Avner
in memory of their parents,
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My Religion and the War

A Discourse by Emil G. Hirsch
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Lev. XIX

"We know now that life and limb, time, talent and treasure belong to our nation, none of us will keep back."—Hirsch Reform Advocate, April 1917.

H622m

IN SOME very learned books on the art of preaching the advice is given the preacher to preface every sermon with a fervent appeal addressed to God for the gift of grace and such power of speech as will stir the minds and thrill the hearts of his congregation. In many parts of the older continent this custom is observed in both Jewish and non-Jewish pulpits, in our land and usually on this platform it has been honored more in the breach. Today I certainly have good cause for petitioning God for aid and guidance. More than ever before am I impressed with the wisdom of the Rabbi's caution bidding even wise men have a care of their words. The power of articulate language is the distinguishing faculty of man. The old translators gave to the Hebrew phrase Nephesh 'hayah by which Adam is dignified in the old Creation story the value of the speaking being. Their rendering witnesses forsooth to their fullness of insight into the distinguishing capacity of our manhood.

But this very qualification exposes men to risks which sometimes are by no means to be reckoned slight. Somebody has likened words to a stone which after leaving the hand of him who throws it can neither be recalled nor be controlled in its free flight. Psychologists know that the art of hearing is still more difficult and rare than that of speaking. In printed livery even words are not protected against the intrusion of the sympathies and antipathies, the prejudices and the partialities dormant in the mind and the heart of the reader. After all it is he who gives to the sentences of Emerson or Shaw their tone. The French worded deep wisdom when they said c'est le ton qui fait la musique. As one is predisposed so

will he welcome and interpret the message of the author who addresses him. Approval and disapproval depend largely upon factors of the personal equation. Scholars have to be on their guard against their intrusion. Interpretations of ancient writers and writings are apt to be colored by the personal, political and social and economic and religious leanings of their modern reader. The chosen minds are few who may see as Moses is said to have seen the Deity, that is Truth, face to face. The less gifted prophets have visions but these are dulled. They are reflected from blurred mirrors. The son of Amram looked thru a transparent, finely ground glass. (Leviticus Rabba section one, compare I. Cor. xiii., 12.) Of suggestive significance is the other observation credited to Rabbi Yehuda, the son of Il'ay, that Moses saw truth thru one and the same glass while other prophets had recourse to nine mirrors. In other words the man of genius is free from the shifting accidents of mood and atmosphere. His medium does not change from hour to hour. Less competent minds have great difficulty to maintain themselves free from the bondage to impressions which vary as their differing pre-occupations exact tribute from them.

This is the fate of the written word held in the straight jacket of pen and print. To use a Rabbinic idiom if the flame consumes the cedar tree what may the little hyssop bough expect? What about the reception accorded the fugitive spoken sound and syllable? Hearing is by far a more elusive art than seeing. Often one single expression alone lays hold of our memory so strongly that what preceded and followed is totally obliterated. May I venture to cite to the witness stand my own little grandson? Two of his great-grandfathers you know were Rabbis, I his grandfather also am of the profession, and his own

father in a fit of mental aberration I suppose had given his brilliant brain to the Jewish ministry, an active and very highly honored teacher now in one of our sister congregations. Yet with all these antecedents shall I say to his credit, the lad coming home from Sunday School one day reported upon inquiry that that morning he had been taught there is no God. Upon further searching it was found that at the service there had been read the passage, "There is no God besides Thee." This qualifying addition had escaped the attention of the young pupil. Men of maturer years than he have fallen into similar error. One broken phrase will stick in their memory and upon it they build the account of the preacher's declarations. Others and their number is not small unconsciously and unintentionally misconstrue the purport of whatever statement may be made in their hearing. Complained another Sunday School attendant that the teacher was terribly conceited for he had emphatically bidden his class know, "I am the Lord; thou shalt have no other God before my face." Yea c'est le ton qui fait la musique. Even the speaker's voice is an element of considerable consequence. The boy writing home for money to his father not initiated into the mysteries of the alphabet, was granted or was refused the stipend according as his request happened to be read to pater by his soft spoken sister at home or by the gruff voiced butcher boy in the shop.

In days like these when hysteria is epidemic public speaker is exposed more than ever to misunderstandings. Who of us may claim exemption from the psychosis brought on by this terrible strain which is upon nation and individual? Indeed if ever there was need for you and me of prayerful thought there is now. Humbly I ask that such words only be laid this morn-

ing on my lips as shall not blur my intended meaning, and that to you be given such charity and clarity as will forefend your misconstruing my views or your drawing from them erroneous conclusions. Were it not presumptuous I should petition that unto me be granted the diction of the prophets who, say the Rabbis, spoke in "holy language, in pure language, in clear language, yea in the tongue in which the angels sing God's sanctity." (Midrash Wayikra Rabba, i., 14.) Wekara zeh el zeh such strains as will call forth responsive, joyful assent.

Last Sunday at the first session of the Conference on Religion and Synagog held in this auditorium a young and brilliant colleague of mine inspired and instructed those of us who sat at his feet in words of heartening wisdom. He convinced us that the lamp of religion will not be quenched by the torrents of blood and tears poured out at the shrine of hideous as well as holy War. He was sure that it was even now rising to new influence among men. Needless for me to say that I did not in all details share his confidence and construction. Perhaps his understanding of the meaning of religion and its function and mine lie in different planes. But it was his masterful exposition that suggested to me the theme for our study this morning. Without trying to lift the curtain from off the days and doings to come after the paroxysm of passion now gripping men shall be stilled, I would search for signposts along humanity's present Golgotha from the tell-tale inscriptions of which the religionist may draw some comfort.

Of course, the devotee of true religion feels keenly the sad disappointment that as yet Isaiah's forevision of God-guarded Peace has not been fulfilled. Yet awful War has taught the world anew the tremendous meaning of Duty. In so far it has lent tremendous

emphasis to Judaism's sacramental syllables. Mitzwah and the verb from which the noun is derived abound and stand forth solemnly in Judaism's vocabulary. 'Hobh, sacred obligation, too, rings with a sonorously Jewish appeal. Duty more than rights, responsibility more than privilege, are the keys in which Judaism modulates and melodies life's rhythms. In this crisis Jew found himself confronted by no necessity to acquire a new alphabet in which to write out his convictions. Duty called him and he answered with a glad Hinneni, Here I am. That call for him was God's voice. In every land he rose with the determination Na'aseh we nishma' to do and only later reason. Certainly the Jew who had voluntarily or at birth been consecrated a citizen of our beloved and free land never hesitated for never so brief a moment. When the decision had been taken which sent our armies into the trenches, the Jew at once knew where his duty lay, and he did it. The aims of the conflict as specified by the President ring true to the deepest harmonies of our religion. Not conquest and not spoil but justice and freedom are set forth as the goal which it is ours to reach. Our way is across thorns and over stones. It urges us on into the valley of the shadow of death. Our boys donned the Khaki, a uniform more honorable and honored than which no general ever wore, an apparel worthy of the Melekh ha-Kabhod, the glorious ruler whose entrance into the joy-stirred capital the Hebrew song celebrates in jubilant acclaims. (Psalm xxiv.)

Many among us learned how to apply anew the old Jewish lesson of Duty. In the piping days of peace numerous were they who regarded the nation as a convenient device for their protection in the pursuit of private aims and even per-

haps while engaged in a refined and secret predatory raid upon the property of the less wary neighbors. Private interests, at the utmost, class ambition and benefits were in the foreground of what public solicitude they displayed. Their recurring refrain ran to the insistence that the administration had no other business than to do something for each and every one of their cotery. Politicians clamored for office, merchants for tariffs and schedules of railroad rates so devised as to confer advantages on them at the expense of others. The laboring men in their turn wanted legislation to further their cause. They had indeed greater justification for their demands and expectations than all other claimants for favors at the hands of Congress and the Executive branches of our government. Even the occasional outbursts of patriotism the skyrockets at national festivities invariably ran to statistics about commerce and industry, about the output of mills and mines, about the crops of corn and wheat, about bales of cotton and tons of iron. That fundamentally each of us was part of the government and, that not merely with his personal security and material success in view, only at rare intervals dimly glimmered upon our thinking. Yea we were impatient of the men who from platform and pulpit would presume to suggest the truer theory of the individual's relations to organised society and the deeper intent of patriotism. The grim hand of war gripping us has opened our eyes to a wider and nobler outlook. We are beginning to comprehend that nation spells priesthood and patriotism consecration. One is called to stand with all, and serve at the altar not of his petty and selfish needs and plans but at that high-altar of the common weal and wealth, the nation's destiny and design. Life, limb, are not ours in the sense in which we used so comfortably to construe

our proprietorship. Duty demands the supreme sacrifice and sanctifies it.

In musty tomes of controversial theology, the assertion is frequent that Judaism's is dimmer than the Church's taper in as much as no torch is lit to light up the path to individual salvation. Israel has always accentuated the community. Thru the all the one sought and found content and contentment for his own personality. Scramble for individual salvation, the "hitting of the trail" alone and in solitude and selfishness was never a Jewish pastime or passion. OUR father, OUR God and God of OUR forefathers are the apostrophes of the Jewish tongue when phrasing laudation and supplication to the God of the All. WE have sinned, confessed even he who may have believed himself to be free of transgression knowing that for the shortcomings of the community he too was responsible. It is this consciousness of community-Duty and Danger which war accentuates. It lays on the young and vigorous the heavier toll. But it also wings knowledge of requiting compensation. Selfishness, at least individual selfishness, is burned away in the searching fires of this furnace. As long as President Wilson's words remain our pole stars national egotism will not infest us to rob the sacrifice which Duty to our Country exacts of its justifying sublimity. Jewish religiosity in this has certainly not been put to the blush. Be he born in the United States or an adopted son of the nation marching under the Star Spangled Banner the Jew obeys his religion's injunction and is free from the bitterness which perhaps may fill the heart of soldiers under other flags that the cause is not just.

Studied from another angle War has confirmed another fundamental conception of the Jewish construction of life. Before these trying days some of us occa-

sionally would point out that private wealth and property spelled high obligation. Power and possession lost their justification the moment they were twisted into privileges and tools for exploiting the personality of others. Such theories would of course be received with an indulgent smile, sometimes however also with an angry frown. They passed among the good-natured beneficiaries of our imperfectly adjusted social system for vagaries of idealists, perhaps of slightly unbalanced fanatics. The preacher would be patted patronisingly on the back. Good talk he was told that was for Sunday but weekday stress and strife followed its own inexorable rules. In commerce and the trades the Law of the Jungle implacably obtained. The race was to the swift, the booty to the strong, the prize to the crafty and circumspect. God indeed was for all but the Devil take the hindmost. And now. From the National Sinai a new Decalog has thundered forth unmistakably, yea majestically, reading the lines of the Tablets in terms bordering on what you used to shudder at and denounce as socialism. Your property is not your own. You hold your warrant for its administering from the Government. You are its stewards, its trustees. What percentage of your earnings or part of your wealth shall directly be placed at the disposal of the Government it is not for you to determine. In proportion as you have, you must give. Voluntarily, spontaneously, if you will, but in the last analysis the Community, the Nation, has proprietary and prior rights. These are not new theories. They who have paid attention to the legislation of Scripture have abundant proof at hand to substantiate the assertion that, where informed of the Jewish spirit, property never outweighed personality, that in the foreground of Pentateuchal legislation's solicitude stands soul not soil, man free, the social

factor, the co-worker in the great work of God's creation as the Rabbis so happily and so pithily put the idea. Our many and varied contributions to war funds, our subscriptions to Liberty Loans chime well with the fundamental teachings of our religion. The true Jew requires no urging to be mindful that his savings and his earnings are not his own in the sense that he may give of his holdings when and what he chooses and may refuse to carry his part of the burden when and as he lists. The Rabbis changing the voweling of the Hebrew word for "engraved 'haruth" into 'heruth Freedom tell us that freedom was the divine inscription on the Tablets. Freedom mark well, and just for this the "ten words" were commands, were vocalised duties. Service is the equivalent of liberty according to Jewish reading. Wealth is learning this lesson. The Jew had but to open his charter-books to find it impressively enunciated. And he has indeed lived that lesson under severe trials of centuried duration.

A third emphasis the war has brought to universal recognition. Is Food our own even after we have paid its price? Have we the right to waste it? Before this time of searching and self-examination few were they who would have tolerated the intrusion upon them of the theory that the most plethoric purse is morally restricted in the use and is restrained from the abuse of the things men need for their sustenance. Were not corners run in the staff of life and other articles of prime human necessity? The Jewish Law is informed of the truer conception. Our chapter this morning reminds us that none could dispose of the corner of his field as he desired. To the poor and the stranger a part of the harvest belonged. Those of you who have been brought up in the old Jewish ways remember what importance was attached to the old

Jewish injunction Bal Tash'heth. Nothing was permitted to go to waste. Not even a scrap of paper was thrown foolishly away or spoiled. The consciousness was ever active in the Jew that another might need the crumbs from the richer table.

Bread was something holy where the family table was likened unto an altar and the altar again was named a family table a Shul'-han. Under the lash we are learning as a people this good old Jewish teaching. Waste has to a certain extent been the besetting sin of our lightmooded nation. We owned a continent of apparently inexhaustible stores of plenty. Iron, coal, cotton, corn, wheat and what not repaid our industry in such abundance that never the thought approached us there might strike the hour bidding us be thrifty and saving. God had favored us as he had no other branch of the human family. A virgin continent welcomed the pioneer's axe and the farmer's plough. Mines and mountains treasuring the riches of the ages had waited for our coming to open at our knocking their treasury-chambers. They repaid most liberally the prospector's daring and the engineer's skill. Other nations had to find nourishment for seventy millions of men from a territory scarce as large as one of our States, Texas. And their soil was by no means as fertile and the climate as varied as ours.

The religionist may well exclaim Odekha Ki Innithani, voweling the verse differently from the received text,—I thank Thee for thy chastising. This new tho heart-searching experience is bound to wean our people of their thoughtlessness and impress upon them the sacredness of food. The altruism which has found such stirring expression in President Wilson's addresses now will take its seat at our table. I trust this consecration will outlast the calamity which has recalled us to the better conviction. None shall go

hungry hereafter, even if to bring this about we shall have to forego revelling in boastful luxury and indulging in overfeeding.

But shall I then count War a blessing? I for one cannot. As a Jew I cannot but remember that one of our Prophets and his words are incorporated twice in Scripture rhapsodised about the happier time when the sword shall be turned into ploughshare. I cannot forget the solemnity which the Jewish spirit reads into the word Peace the prayers breathed in every synagogal service for its establishment among men. The Rabbis knew that this goal was on the crest of as yet not fully mastered mountains. Bidding Godspeed to the living they would send him on his errand with the exhortation Lekh la-shalom, proceed on toward peace. The dead they sped on their way to eternal rest with the salutation Lekh ba-shalom,—Go Thou in peace. To my thinking war is God's rod. It is not for me to analyse the conditions which led to this present eruption of Titanic furies, fuelled for many decades of intrigue in volcanic abysses of diplomacy and trickery. When Congress had spoken for us, an American, I had no right to dissent. I had to obey the Law and I did obey it. Our enemy's government had invaded our sovereign rights. I had hoped that this might not come about. That it has is not our nation's fault or wilful plotting. And yet I feel that looking deeper into the temper and the ambition of our generation one must come to the conclusion that disregard of the principle announced by the Psalmist, is the mother of all this misery. Said the Jewish singer: "The heavens are the heavens unto God but the earth He gave to the sons of men." This earth is large enough for all of God's children and the sea ought to be the highway for all, open to all who have to send forth the fruit of their toil to distant

ports. This greed for territory, for supremacy over other men, for exclusive markets and exclusive national glory is the arch sin which called for God's punitive correction. Cain's crime according to the Rabbis was induced by his desire to own the whole earth. Even such peace as was officially established among the powers was but an armistice and under its aegis war, commercial war, with tollgates at every frontier was fiercely waged. Speaking of Assyria, Isaiah hails it as the appointed agent of God's will appointed to bring to shame the haughtiness and pride of insolent Israel. The prophet deplores, however, that instead of recognising this intention of God the victor himself lapsed into the arrogant self-idolatry which was so insufferable in the chastised people. America certainly has entered the lists as scarce ever before did another great power. It is indeed the rod of God which it is called to wield. My confidence is that as it has escaped the corrupting by national presumptuousness it will also emerge from the battle still true to its ideals and free from the contamination which in the case of Assyria resulted so disastrously.

America will fight the war also as no other nation ever fought one. War stirs passion. It opens the floodgates wide to hate. I am a Jew and in the books I find it written and I have heard it repeated from many lips that hatred is the sorry distinction of the Jew. His God they say is the deity of revenge. They have ignorantly and not infrequently maliciously misread Biblical text to bolster this slander. "Mine i. e. God's is vengeance," the poet declares (Deuteronomy xxii., 35) putting into the mouth of God his own theory of history and more especially his reading of the meaning of his own people's undoing. The old seer and singer

saw God's hand in every human experience. Calamity self-invited by wickedness spelled for him God's avenging of the wrong perpetrated. But to infer from this that Judaism canonises hate is committing rape on truth. The daily prayer of a Rabbi unfortunately not included in the daily liturgy of ours was a petition that "his heart be kept pure from hate of fellowman and that of fellowman from hate of him." The doctrine of non-resistance is not Jewish and yet the wife of Rabbi Meir noble Beruria taught her husband the vital distinction between sin and sinner, a distinction drawn in the very text of the Psalm, the cessation of Hataim sins not of the Hoteim sinners being predicted. She would pray for the undoing of sin not of sinners. You recall that when at the naval battle between the American forces and those of Spain the crew of Captain Philipp's ship broke out into cheers their valiant American commander bade them hush. "Those poor fellows are drowning," he called out from the bridge in the very hour of his triumph. The American officer did not know that he was almost literally quoting a Rabbinical observation. When Pharaoh, that archtyrant, prototype of Tzar and Kaiser, who had boastingly declared, "I shall draw my sword; I shall pursue; I shall divide the spoil, I shall have my fill of carnage," had met his doom and been swathed by death in the shrouds of the pitiless sea, so runs a Rabbinic story, the angels in heaven broke out in a song of triumph but were at once hushed by God. "The works of my hands are drowning and you would sing songs unto me?" spoke the Almighty in rebuke of their misplaced joy.

Hate like bribes blinds the eye. Our nation is not one of homogeneous ethnological strain. Many races and nations sent their sons to our shores. The newcomers received signal favors at our hand but they

also contributed mightily to our civilisation, our wealth and power. Yet hatred will breed distrust. Let an incident from Jewish history warn us. During the unequal struggle against Rome patriotism inflamed by hatred of the oppressor lept to unholy flames in Jerusalem. Bands of Zealots as they were called, the Kannaim, impatient of the slow effect of their resistance began to distrust the patriotism of their fellow Jews. Armed with short swords, hence they came to be dreaded as Siccarii, they ran amuck killing all whom they suspected. One of the greatest teachers, Yokhanan ben Sakkay, incurred their disfavor. He had to seek safety in flight and report has it that he had to be carried thru the gate in a coffin, otherwise he would have fallen a prey to the fanaticism of these perfervid patriots. Measures of restrictive force to hinder the intercourse between Jew and non-Jew are found in Rabbinic legislation which owe their inception to these men of exaggerated hate. Even so during the French revolution the circumspect were branded suspects. May a good God forefend similar ebullitions in our land.

Hate does not strengthen the armor of the nation. Such talk as I saw in a report of a meeting only this week I for one tho I respect the patriotism of the speaker asking that our sword be not sheathed until every German shall have disappeared from the face of earth and German shall be a dead language cannot but have a heartening effect on the spirits of our enemy. If this report reaches their lines, and most likely it will, it will play into the hands of the Junkers. Here will these misleaders of their people say to the soldiers and the women at home, you have what you may expect. Even our enemies or rather the people in the enemy country are not altogether reft of human feelings. They will continue to fight for their homes

and their language which is also dear to them, all the more fiercely if they suspect that complete destruction is the punishment prepared for them. If my reading has informed me rightly the men in the trenches are not of the hating mood. That pathetic book "le feu" by one who has been over the top speaks of the soldiers behind the opposing lines in terms of pity. He knows that they too suffer, that they are suffering for their country be the government under which they live never so devilish or despotic. But why do they not rise up in revolution? For us it is easy to give them this counsel. But do we not believe in our country right or wrong? Their nation, according to the testimony of no less a man than President Wilson, has contributed much to the store of civilisation. To wipe it from the face of earth will neither help it nor bring gain to the world at large. Hate will not enable us to help them to democratise their political institutions. They will trust us all the more readily if we take our cue from our President's speeches and messages. I for one cannot overlook the paragraph in the holiness-Law read this morning from the scroll. Lo thikkom welo thittor. Thou shalt not harbor a revengeful spirit. Rebuke thou shalt Thy erring brother but not hate him in Thy heart. Significant for me is a very keen observation credited to Rabbi Samuel, the son of Na'hman. He draws attention to the difference of expression in Deuteronomy xxvii., 12 and 13. They shall bless and they shall stand for the curse. The blessing is as it were an outpouring of the person or the tribe charged with the function. The curse is meant to be as it were impersonal. Certainly we shall defeat the German government and in doing so must chastise their people. Does a surgeon harbor hatred against the patient upon whom he must operate? We are appointed surgeons and I would rather be filled

of pity than of hatred. I am an American. But I am also a Jew. I know that I and fellow Jews thruout the ages have been condemned for deeds never done. Accusations against us have been universally believed for which there is no basis in fact. Remembering this I would judge our enemy lekaph Zekhuth giving him and his the benefit of the doubt. This will not interfere with my doing all I am able to accomplish to bring to pass that which President Wilson has named our purpose.

Another Rabbinical parable comes to mind which I would apply to the matter before us. A king, so runs the anecdote, had a keg of wine. He appointed two sets of watchmen to stand guard over it, one composed of Nazirites, who were under the vow of abstaining from intoxicants, the other of known topers. The next morning he paid the Nazirites one shilling each while to the topers he gave two shillings. The Nazirites grumbled. Why should they receive only half the wage paid the others. Answered the King, "You were not under the stress the others were. The keg's content meant nothing to you; but the poor topers had a hard tustle with themselves." Much unjust suspicion is about concerning the loyalty of citizens of German birth or stock. They who never had family ties with the people now our enemy cannot imagine what heartaches the present situation entails on those that have. If quarrel breaks out between a man's mother and his wife none who is a man will for one moment doubt where he will stand. He will be found by the side of his wife. And yet may he not deplore that such a state of affairs has befallen his household? Will he not as long as open hostilities have not broken out and the rupture is not complete be justified in trying to forestall the final catastrophe? May he not occasionally try and find excuses for the conduct of

his mother? They say she is a hag. Perhaps she is. But this will only intensify his heart-ache. In the position of the son whose wife for good reasons has a quarrel with the mother are millions of our fellow citizens. They are as it were the topers of my Rabbinical story. Let us not make their burden harder by unjustified distrust. Their loyalty is above suspicion. The moment war was declared there was for them only one path to tread and that was the path of undivided loyalty to their oath. But that path for them ran across Gethsemane. They are walking it in strength firmly resolved to do their duty without quibble and reservations.

And then there are others who like myself have received most of their education in German Universities. They having lived among the people learned to love many of them. They were guests at their table, they used to break bread with them; some in days of sickness were nursed back to health by them. Is it American-like to ask these to forget all the kindness of which they were the recipients, all the benefits they derived from the schools maintained by the government of the several States in the Empire? Their heart, too, was heavy when the German government forced our nation into the war. It took some time for these and those of German birth to become adjusted to the situation. Not that I or any other of this large number ever doubted where our duty lay. To this country and to none other we owe loyalty; to it we would give and if needs be shall give all that is ours to the last drop of blood and the last farthing in our purse. And yet the heart did ache and made our walk into the valley of decision not easy. The expedition against the Midianites was headed by Joshua not Moses. Why? ask the Rabbis. Moses, explain they, had been received hospitably at one time by the now enemy. He

could not "cast stones into the well from which he had drunk." Hate we shall not but we shall stand by our flag. Come what may for the victory of that flag we shall pray and work with undivided loyalty. None of us has sympathy with aristocracy and autocracy, with Junkerdom, and may I add, "standpatters." We would have everywhere on earth a government "of the people, by the people and for the people." But, as Lincoln said, "with malice toward none, with charity to all."

Some of us speak the German language. They cannot understand the reasonableness of the outcry against its further use among us. Time was when the right of this language to be cultivated in this land was acknowledged. Not a political campaign but speakers were sent out to address citizens of German birth in their native dialect. Even now the government is conducting a speaking campaign for the Liberty Loan thru foreign language sections and German is not under the ban. Thought not tongue makes sedition. A few years ago our service and the preaching as in our congregation so in many American synagogs were conducted in German. Were the worshippers disloyal? Was Einhorn when from 1856 to 1861 he pleaded the cause of the Union in Baltimore not truly American in his sentiments and convictions tho his German sermons rivaled in superbness the diction of Goethe and to his dying day he voiced his staunch Americanism in German sounds? Or was Liebman Adler in this city not loyal when during the Civil War from his pulpit he preached against national distintegration and slavery but did this in German? Or was I not an interpreter of American ideas when at the Congress of Liberal Religions convened in Berlin in 1910 in their own tongue I described to the Germans the freedom of American Churches and Syn-

agogs and showed how under that freedom religion did come to its own as never it does under autocracy? Was I less American when last Monday in Hebrew in answer to the eloquent plea of a Judean native of Jerusalem I told him that we Jews of America will not exchange our star bejeweled flag for the standard of Zionism? Was I disloyal or unpatriotic because my convictions were articulated in Hebrew syllables? As a matter of fact our co-belligerents are studying this enemy idiom now even more zealously than before the war. What language could we have spoken in this land when we were at war with England if the enemy's is breeding treason?

There is an imprecatory prayer in the old Jewish prayerbook directed against the Malshinim, the traducers and denouncers. Jews from of old have suffered grievously from men of this stamp. We have, this goes without saying, eliminated this petition from our ritual. Malshinim may well be rendered "tongue-waggers." They who provoked Rabban Gamliel to include among the most solemn prayers of the service a petition that no hope be vouchsafed unto them were not aliens. They were of Jewish blood and birth. Inured to suffering as Israel was the misery brought upon them by these talebearers was of such refined cruelty that the faithful were amply excused for their outcry addressed to heaven. Hostility from without was never cause for despair in Jewry. The enemy whom they dreaded was the apostate and defamer cradled within the Jewish home. He willfully and maliciously sought to disunite the faithful to interfere with their study of the Torah with the practice of their religion. He never hesitated to resort to willful falsehood.

Ours be the warning. Death and life says the wise man in the good book are in the power of the tongue.

(Proverb xviii, 21.) An ancient translator gives the sentence a still more suggestive setting. Spoon (or perhaps a piece of bread shaped like a spoon) and sword are linked to the tongue. The life sustaining and subserving tool as well as the instrument of ruthless death. Were the times of ordinary flow and rhythm the truth of this observation might well be heeded. In these days of doubt and danger of passion and pressure of stress and distress certainly the talebearer's trade should be despised and be stamped out. Rattle snakes give warning before they jump on their prey. The "Holekh Rakhil the whisperer" goes about stealthily. The chapter from which the foregoing observation on the tongue's potentiality is taken contains other verses to the same purport. The eighth and the ninth according to Aben Ezra must be read connectedly, then their full intent is brought out. "While the words of the whisperer are dainty morsels which go down into the innermost parts of the belly (a luscious bit) he, because he does not mind his own business, (but pries into and mouths about the doings and sayings of others) is a brother to him that is a destroyer." May a good God protect us from the insidious destruction which dogs the soft heeled steps of the defamer. Need I add the anecdote about the good servant of the Rabbi, who sent to market with the commission to buy the best it afforded, brought home a tongue and the next day, sent out to procure the worst there on sale, again returned carrying a tongue? Leprosy, say the Rabbis, is produced by the evil tongue. Metzora' leper, they would read Motzi-Ra', the spreader of evil and unfounded reports. May a Good God protect our nation from this sort of leprosy.

The Pulpit must stand out against this plague. We shall continue to teach the religion of

Duty but of Mercy withal. Yea even in these days we shall protest against the spreading of views which would bar us as non-Christian from claiming this as our country. The doctrine of the Christian state is a favorite argument among our enemies. They more than any other people have based upon this confusion their anti-Semitism. Civilisation is broader than is covered by any one sectarian adjective or national qualification. Judaism certainly has taught the basic principles upon which the Temple of the true humanities rests. What we shall never forget is that a united nation shall march out to do the consecrated task come to it. The sons of Anglo- and German-Americans, the men of Italian antecedents and Slav traditions, of Irish stock and Scandinavian blood all baptised in the holy water of Liberty and Justice shall march on to victory shoulder to shoulder an unbroken line of defenders of the right. Home dissensions and distrusts shall not make the duty of our soldiers and sailors more perilous than it is. Christian, Mohammedan, Jew, non-believer all alike have been called and they have answered the call. A truce to suspicion, a truce to hatred, a truce to fetishism of words and labels.

Religion, however, must also keep the home line. The hour of worship shall not always be under the obsession of the fearful reality. Just because the strain is so awful the pulpit shall point to the heights alas now shrouded in clouds. Would you ask of the symphony orchestra to devote every concert to martial airs? I know we do not. It was my good fortune yesterday to attend one of these wonderful concerts for which our home orchestra is so famous. Yet masters of enemy birth were given audience and from them we drank in courage and inspiration. Similarly

the sermon in these trying weeks must not neglect other altitudes. It should speak of universal truths, of hopes and certainties which are ever knocking at the doors of our hearts and minds. Not to phrase at every service the challenge of the times is not symptom of indifference. It is the part of wisdom to keep nerves and feelings keyed to high and eternal verities since the harsh realities are so heavily pressing. Yea religion shall not stifle the cry for peace. Such a peace as President Wilson is ready to negotiate will be a victory for America, a defeat of Despotism. Some years ago it fell to my lot in the Metropolitan City of the East to speak of Lincoln. To me came words descriptive of our flag. I hailed it as the flag that had borrowed the velvet of the sky for the cushion of the stars and then festooned this pillow with the blushes of the dawn and the streamers announcing peace. Yea even now would I hail the stripes in red as harbingers of a new day and the clear ribbons of white as the foretellers of the Messianic time of Peace universal, Peace pillared like God's throne on Justice, Righteousness, Love and Liberty.

That flag, our flag,
Long may it wave
Over the "world" of the free,
The home of the brave.

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